

As Victor's mental skills increased, so, too, apparently did his range of emotions. At first Victor showed no feelings for the people who cared for him. But gradually he began to show interest in and affection for those around him. He was particularly attached to Madame Guerin. He even began to like his strict schoolmaster, Itard. Victor also expressed emotion by showing delight for the beauties of nature. He became excited when he completed a new task correctly. But when he repeatedly failed to do something, he would close his eyes while tears trickled down his cheeks.

One day Madame Guerin's husband became ill. He was taken away from home to be treated for his illness. Victor was not told of this. One of Victor's duties was to set the table at dinner time. He continued to set a place for Monsieur Guerin. Even though he was made to remove it each time, he never failed to set the place the next day. Monsieur Guerin did not recover from his illness. The day of his death Madame Guerin returned home to find that Victor had set his place at the table as usual. Victor seemed to understand Madame Guerin's grief. He removed the place from the table and sadly put the dishes in the cupboard. Victor never set the place again.

Itard made two reports to the French government in which he described Victor and told of his efforts to teach him. The second report was made when he had been teaching Victor for five years. Those reports give us the only information we have about him. Although Itard continued to work with Victor, nothing is known about his later progress. Victor died in 1828 when he was about forty years old. Ten years later, Itard, his teacher, died also.

1. In what ways was Victor a boy without a history? How did this affect his way of life?
2. Think of some of the things Victor might have inherited from the past that you take for granted. Think about your clothes, for example. How would your life be different if we didn't know how to make clothes? What other skills do we learn that play a major role in our lives?
3. Think of the inventions on which many of our skills depend. What would life be like if we didn't have the needle and thread? How would your life be different without the automobile? Suppose we didn't know how to grow food. What would your life be like then?
4. We have inherited ideas as well as inventions. For example, think about the idea of democracy. How does that idea affect your life? What are some other ideas that have had great influence on you?

declared him to be an incurable idiot, inferior in some respects to domestic animals. His eyes were unsteady, wandering vaguely from one object to another. He seemed insensitive to the loudest noises or the gentlest music. He seemed indifferent to heat and cold, and would pick up potatoes that had been pulled out of boiling water without showing any reaction at all.

Itard decided that he first needed to develop Victor's senses. By using warm clothing, heated rooms, and hot bath water, Itard was able slowly to make Victor sensitive to heat and cold. Victor also soon developed a keen sense of smell and taste. But he seemed to have difficulty hearing although he was not deaf. He remained motionless when a gun was fired behind his back, but he turned around immediately at the sound of the cracking of a nut. Itard worked with him to get him to distinguish between sounds. Victor eventually learned to tell the difference between the sound of a drum and the tapping of two sticks. But he seemed unable to distinguish variation in the sound of a human voice.

Itard, therefore, was not able to teach Victor to talk. Nor did Victor understand any of Itard's speech except for simple commands. However Victor became very clever at letting his wishes be known through signs. If he wanted to eat he would point to his bowl. He would motion to the door when he wanted to go outside. If curious visitors stayed too long, he would give them their coats and hats and show them to the door.

Although Victor did not learn to talk, eventually he learned to read simple phrases. This was a long process. Itard first trained him in recognizing differences between pictured objects and then in recognizing letters. Finally Victor learned that words represented objects. Victor first learned words for concrete objects, such as book and hammer. Then he mastered adjectives such as big and little. Finally he learned verbs like come, run, and eat. By getting Victor to imitate him, Itard taught him to write these words. This gave Victor one more way of communicating with those around him.

Itard also worked to develop Victor's memory. He did this by writing down the name of an object that was not in the room and asking Victor to bring it to him. At first Victor had great difficulty with this task. As soon as he could no longer see the word he forgot what he was supposed to bring. But he found he could make speed compensate for his poor memory. When Itard showed him a word, he would run from the room swiftly to find the object before he forgot it. Gradually Victor's memory improved. He stopped running for objects that Itard requested and even loitered a bit in the hall before returning with the right thing.

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of History

As you begin this course, perhaps you are thinking—Why study history? Why learn about the past? Couldn't you do just as well without it? But, of course, the past has made you what you are. History has affected and will continue to affect your life.

Perhaps the most important fact about each one of us is that we learn from each other and from the past. What would it be like if we had no history? What would it be like if we were starting from scratch? What would you be like if there had been NO ONE around to teach you as you were growing up? Keep these questions in mind as you read the following story.

The Wild Boy of Aveyron

There was great excitement in France in the fall of 1799. A wild boy had been captured in the forests of Aveyron! A real child of nature had been discovered, a boy who had grown up completely isolated. Throughout the country people waited eagerly to learn about him. What would he be like? Some people even came from long distances to see this wonder.

What they saw was a dirty, scared creature, unable to talk. He grunted like the beasts of the field. He ate the most filthy refuse and seemed to lack even the simplest human feelings toward people. He spent his time rocking himself backwards and forwards like the animals at the zoo. The boy-animal seemed concerned only with eating, sleeping, and escaping the attentions of sightseers. Most people watched him briefly and became disgusted. Then they declared that the whole thing was probably a hoax, and forgot about him.

One man, however, did not. Twenty-five-year-old Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard was convinced the boy could learn. Itard named him Victor. He believed that Victor lacked the usual human responses because he had never associated with other human beings. Itard was determined to fill this gap. He was confident that Victor would become like normal human beings if he was properly taught. Itard took on the job of being Victor's teacher. Madame Guerin became the boy's governess and Victor lived in her home.

Nothing was known about Victor's early life. No one knew why he was alone in the forest, or how long he had been there. Scientists estimated that Victor was probably about eleven or twelve years old. Some people of the area had reported seeing him running in the woods five years earlier. But no one knew whether he had lived in the woods longer than that. An expert tested Victor and